

30th ANNUAL
Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation

Historic HOME TOUR

Ypsilanti Heritage Festival Event



SUNDAY AUGUST 19, 2007 • NOON-5 P.M.

30th ANNUAL
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Historic HOME TOUR

- ☐ 1. 921 Woods Road
- ☐ 2. 922 Pleasant Drive
- ☐ 3. 310 Hiawatha Street
- ☐ 4. 415 North Huron Street
- ☐ 5. 111 East Forest Street
- ☐ 6. 220 South Huron Street
- ☐ 7. The Norris-Thompson Block
River Street, Depot Town

Ticket No.

ABOUT THE *Foundation*

The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the idea that one of Ypsilanti's greatest resources is its wealth of historic architecture. The Foundation seeks to increase public understanding and appreciation of these architectural links with our past and works to promote the conservation, rehabilitation, and utilization of these

important community assets. The

Foundation publishes its newsletter, *Heritage News*, several times a year and distributes it free of charge to its membership by mail and to the general public at various locations throughout the City.

The Foundation's website is www.yhf.org. Since 1977, the

Foundation's Historic Structure

Marker Awards Program has recognized more than 145 homes, businesses, churches, and other community buildings in Ypsilanti for significant historic architecture and continuing, sensitive maintenance. The annual Historic Home Tour is sponsored by the Foundation. Proceeds from the tour fund the Marker Awards, community projects, and education programs on preservation-related topics, which are held throughout the year and are open to the public. For more information on the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation or to find out about becoming a member, contact Henry Prebys, president, at 487-0595.



Welcome

Welcome to the 30th Annual Ypsilanti Historic Home Tour. Since 1977, the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation has been pleased and proud to present one of our community's most important resources, our wealth of historic architecture. Once, again, Ypsilanti residents have graciously agreed to open their doors so that we all may see and appreciate the results of this community's historic preservation efforts. We take this opportunity to thank them. This year's tour features seven historic properties located throughout the city. Enjoy the tour!

Although the structures are numbered for your convenience in the brochure, you are free to visit them in any order you wish.

Visitors may be asked to remove shoes. As a courtesy to the homeowners, PLEASE no food or drink, smoking, pets, unsupervised children, strollers, or photography inside the homes.

The ticket holder expressly assumes all responsibility for any personal injury or property damage occurring while on tour.



921 Woods Road

Michael & Laura DeBacker

Prolific local architect R. S. Gerganoff designed this impressive stone and slate-roofed house in the picturesque English Medieval style for the Ferguson family in 1941.

Since its first appearance on this tour, in 2001, the house has undergone dramatic changes. Michael and Laura DeBacker, the latest of many owners, bought the house in summer 2002 and moved in with their three small children, Hannah, Jack, and David. Laura became very excited when she saw a newspaper ad for the house, she explains, because it mentioned a third-floor ballroom. "All my life I've had this dream of living in a house with a ballroom," she says.

In their first year in the house, the DeBackers had all of the windows replaced with fiberglass ones in the style of the original casement windows. Next they turned their attention to the landscaping, adding trees, shrubs, perennials, and bluestone and sandstone walks. Their biggest project was hiring architect Michael Klement, and contractor Deb Moore of Custom Design Build, to reconfigure several crucial rooms on the first floor. The den, which includes a fireplace, is now a dining room, and the kitchen, breakfast room, and former dining room have become a terrific kitchen opening into a family room, making the house much more livable for a modern family. The painted cabinets in the new kitchen match the era of the house and the colors in the new linoleum were inspired by the colors in the original linoleum and wallpaper.

Tourgoers are going to enjoy seeing the changes to the house but they will also love everything that remains original—its five tiled bathrooms, five bedrooms, spacious first- and second-floor foyers, the bar in the very nifty basement, the marble fireplace in the living room, and, of course, the third-floor ballroom! Tourgoers will also appreciate the DeBackers' art collection, put together over the years from forays to the Saline antiques fair and the Ann Arbor Art Fair.



922 Pleasant Drive

Paul & Penny Schreiber

The brick center-entrance colonial revival at 922 Pleasant Drive is the home of Ypsilanti mayor Paul Schreiber and his wife, Penny. The Schreibers are the second owners of the house, which was designed in 1937 by Ypsilanti architect H. E. Schlesinger for Phyllis and Ted Williamson. “Dr. Ted” died in spring 1985 and Phyllis sold the house to the Schreibers in late July.

The house is traditional, with lots of double-hung windows, large rooms, wood floors, and plaster walls in excellent condition. But it is a good guess that the art deco movement—flourishing at nearby Cranbrook in the 1930s—influenced Schlesinger because his design for 922 included an art deco fireplace in the living room, an unusual aluminum balustrade up the curving stairway, art deco-style tile in the master bath, and a curved wall in the spacious second-floor hallway.

The Schreibers were first on this tour twenty years ago, in 1987, and then again ten years ago, in 1997, the year after they remodeled their kitchen. Many changes have been made throughout the house since then, most notably a complete redo of the first-floor laundry room, which doubles as an annex to the kitchen. Other rooms have been repainted, wallpapered, or redecorated, including son Tim’s bedroom, now a light-filled den, and daughter Claire’s bedroom, now a guest room. The Schreibers’ delightful screened porch, where they eat and entertain all summer long, has a fresh and colorful new look.

In late 2001 the Schreibers threw away their rust-encrusted pink metal backyard shed and replaced it with a custom-built shed painted to complement the brick on their house. It is the perfect focal point for their patio and gardens.



310 Hiawatha Street

Mary Jane Dennison & Rick Humesky

This 1933 brick vernacular Tudor is one of two houses on today's tour designed by eclectic Ypsilanti architect R. S. Gerganoff. When Mary Jane (M. J.) Dennison bought the house in 1992, it was a modest piece of charm sitting in the middle of a half-acre city lot just a few houses in from busy West Cross Street. The small house made a big statement, though, with its terrific front Roman window. It is impossible to walk by without fantasizing about knocking on the door and asking to see the room with the Roman window.

M. J. purchased the house from the Helen Crane estate. Helen's husband, Morton, had been groundskeeper for EMU, and he planted many of the trees on the property. By 1997 M. J. had met Rick Humesky, who is now her husband, and they decided to increase the size of the house and add a garage. M. J. was adamant that the house addition must appear seamless. "I didn't want it to look like a wart," she says. She and Rick hired Ann Arbor architect Mary Kalmes. When the 1933 brick could not be matched, the brick that had been removed for the addition was refurbished and put back. The house's red gables are a great modern touch, which was carried over into the new garage.

Today the house has a beautiful galley kitchen, with a space for a table beyond; a family room; a cute mudroom for the dogs; and an expanded master bedroom. The living room with its wood-beamed cathedral ceiling, lovely but simple fireplace, and that aforementioned Roman window lives up to its sidewalk-fantasy reputation. Tourgoers will enjoy standing in the room and looking through the house to the large window in the new family room.

The inside of the house feels cozy and English cottage-ey. M. J. is a veteran stalker of estate sales, Depot Town antiques stores, and the Saline antiques fair. She also inherited antiques from her mother and her favorite "auntie." When you exit the house into the pretty and secluded backyard, you will think you are far out in the country.



415 North Huron Street
Wilkinson-Lewis-Greene House

Steve Hudock & Jeff Ellis

The stunning Italianate Wilkinson-Lewis-Greene house is one of Ypsilanti's most significant historic structures.

Built in 1878 by James Wilkinson for his widowed mother, the house was purchased in 1905 by Harriet Adelaide Lewis, herself a widow with several children. Lewis's daughter Evangeline lived in the house for many, many years.

Following Evangeline's death, the Ypsilanti Historical Society owned the house for a period of time. In late 1989 Earl Greene bought the house from the Historical Society. Greene would prove to be the rescuing angel of this beautiful house, a structure which was once described by Ward Swarts, a restoration architect who contributed to the formation of the Ypsilanti Historic District, as "one of the finest extant examples of eclectic Victorian/Italianate architecture in the Midwest."

Greene spared nothing in his restoration efforts. He employed a researcher from Henry Ford Museum/Greenfield Village and the finest artisans and woodworkers to be found. During the two years following Greene's purchase of 415 North Huron, the restoration team accomplished near miracles. Extraordinary decorative painting was revealed and restored. Under many coats of paint, ceiling paintings were discovered and restored. Door and window frames were found to be of a type of walnut that is now extinct.

Earl Greene died a few years ago, but the house is once again blessed. Its new owners, Steve Hudock and Jeff Ellis, understand its architectural and historical significance and are committed to its preservation.



111 East Forest Street

Bill & Marcia Phillips

When a Realtor told Bill and Marcia Phillips that he thought the house they were looking at was a Sears catalogue kit home, they were immediately smitten. Marcia, a former history teacher and research historian, learned that the original owners, Frank and Katharine (Kitty) Lidke, had purchased the "Fullerton model" in 1926 for \$2,294. The lumber was pre-cut and numbered and then shipped to the Ypsilanti depot, complete with instructions. The practical, sturdy lines of this American Foursquare reflect a uniquely American design, popular in the 1920s.

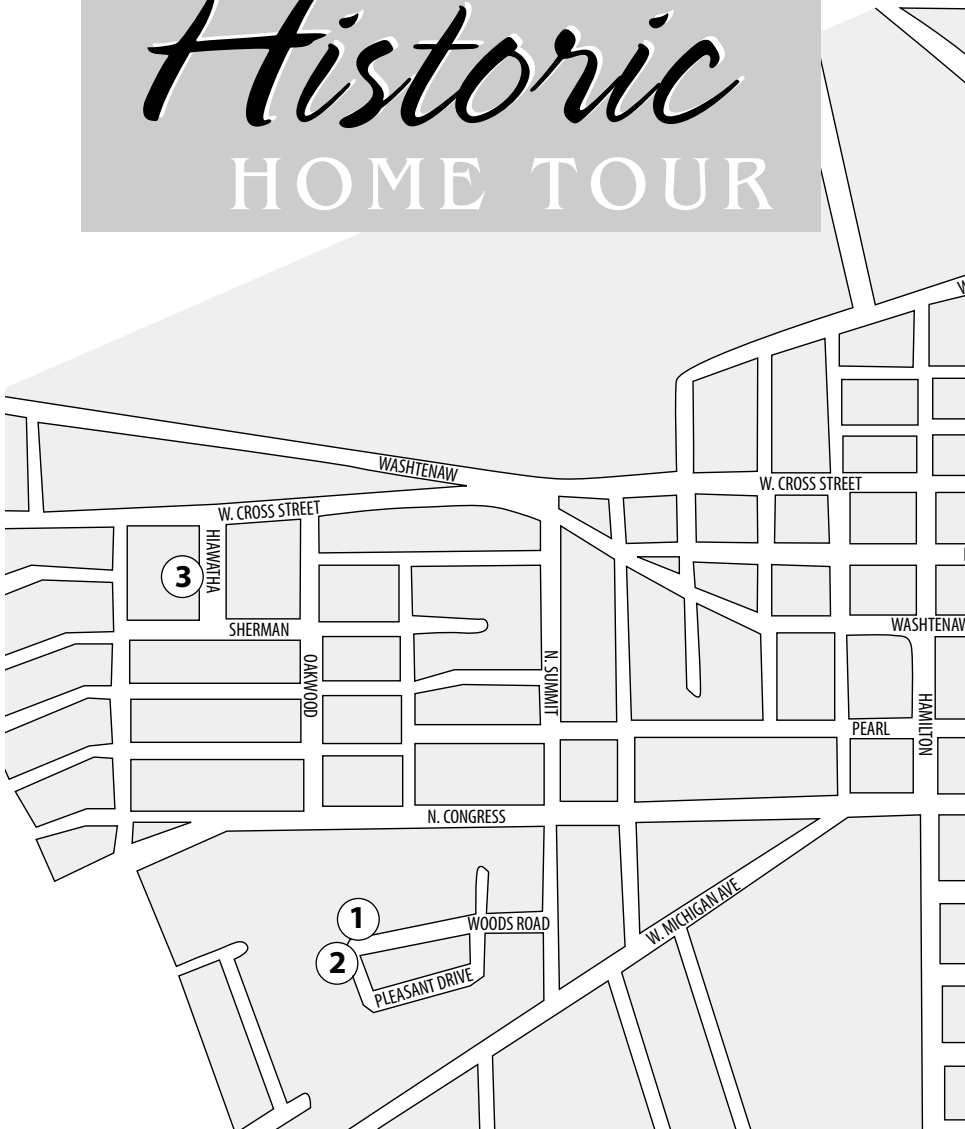
When Sears began selling kit homes in 1908, the company's primary aim was to display and advertise its furniture, home appliances, and accessories. The Phillips house still has the original Sears light fixtures, hardware, kitchen cabinets, and bathroom fixtures. Even the kitchen sink is original!

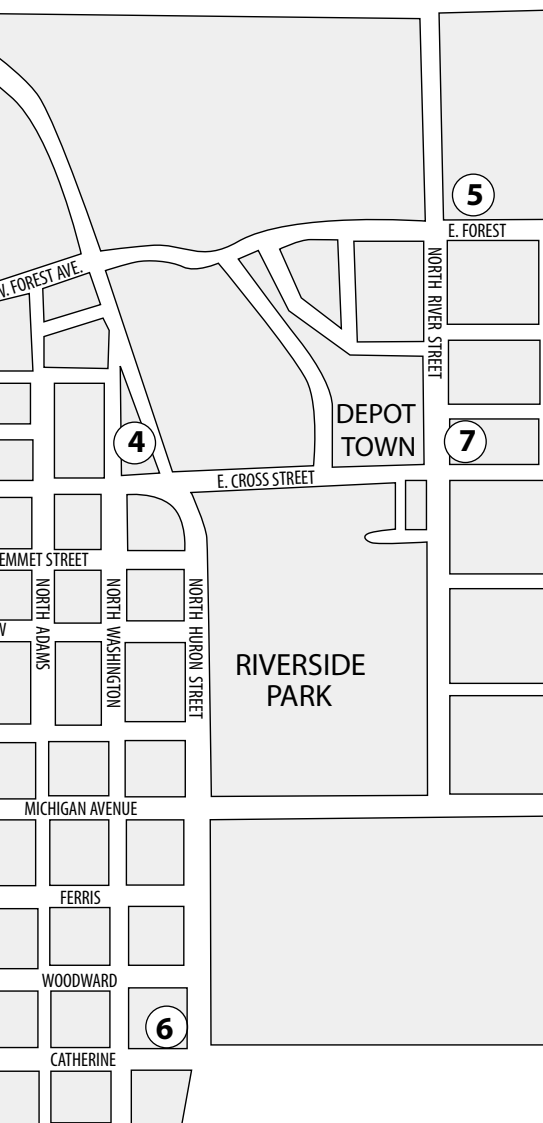
In 2004 Marcia and Bill undertook a major project: the removal of the faux brick siding that had been installed in the 1940s. They invited their friends to "putty parties" to patch the hundreds of nail holes, and they painted the house a shade of gold very close to its original color. The quality of the materials used was evident, says Bill, because none of the clapboards needed to be replaced.

This delightful example of Americana is now restored and preserved for all to appreciate and enjoy. Marcia and Bill have filled their home with family heirlooms and other period pieces. The house really feels like the 1920s.

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Your Guide to the Tour

Key to the

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220 South Huron Street
The Queen's Residence Bed and Breakfast

Joe & Marla Queen

This circa 1870 Victorian Italianate house was built by H. P. Glover for Samuel Barnard, vice president of Ypsilanti's Peninsular Paper Company. Charles Newton, chief buyer for Henry Ford's Greenfield Village, owned the house from the late 1920s into the 1940s. Newton changed the exterior, adding Roman Doric columns, and its current style now veers toward classical revival. Newton also installed an authentic early-eighteenth-century Connecticut kitchen and tavern in the basement. Henry Ford visited the house many times.

In 1999 Marla Frudden (now Queen) purchased 220 South Huron, her third historic house. "I always wanted to own a B and B," says Marla, who had the idea in mind when she discovered this outstanding example of nineteenth-century gracious living. She met Joe Queen in 2005 through their mutual interest in ballroom dancing. They married in April 2006 and began to plan a Bed and Breakfast. The Queen's Residence opened in April and Marla and Joe are offering ballroom dancing lessons to their guests. "We're going for the romance," says Marla, "the dancing, the hot tub, the two pergolas."

Marla started collecting antiques when she was sixteen. The house is filled with her finds picked up over many years from Ann Arbor's Treasure Mart, yard sales, and antique shops. "I like using my stuff," she says.

Tourgoers will enjoy every inch of this spacious high-ceilinged house, which was last on the tour in 2001. Be sure to walk through the wonderful brick-wall-enclosed courtyard, which includes the new pergolas. The basement tavern remains a highlight.



The Norris-Thompson Block • River Street Depot Town

Stewart Beal

Stewart Beal, a young and enthusiastic local developer and contractor, acquired the Norris-Thompson Block in Depot Town last November. Built in 1860 by Ypsilanti pioneer Mark Norris, this historic three-story Italianate building was planned for retail and residential use. But the Civil War intervened and the building became a war barracks. A southeast Michigan reenactors group is currently applying for a state historical marker for the Norris-Thompson Block, one of the few remaining Civil War barracks in the north. Beal likes to point out that what he believes to be "one of the most historic buildings in the state of Michigan," was also among the first Dodge car dealerships.

Mark Norris, founder of the Depot Town area, had owned the Western Hotel across the street where the railroad depot is today. The hotel was torn down to expand the railroad and Norris had the bricks from the hotel demolition site carried across the street for his new building.

For many years after the Civil War, the building was called the Barracks. In 1869 O. E. Thompson bought it to be a paint shop. In 1871 he became a wagon dealer and in 1873 a dealer in agricultural implements. Thompson even manufactured some of his own inventions in the building. He and his sons went on to paint carriages and sell house signs, porch swings, and patterned wallpaper. One year Thompson & Sons sold more than 200 bicycles. It was Thompson's grandson who opened a Dodge dealership in the north end of the building in 1916. The Thompson family owned the building until 1950.

Beal, like his predecessor 147 years ago, is planning a mix of residential, retail, and restaurants for the Norris-Thompson Block; he is close to having signed leases. "I am grateful to be working on such a monumental and important project at such a young age," says Beal. "After the Thompson block is completed, it will be the premier residential address in Ypsilanti."

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Thank You

In this 30th anniversary year
of the Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation
Historic Home Tour,
we wish to extend a very special
and heartfelt thanks to

Norton's Flowers and Gifts

for their thirty years of
generously donating stunning and
unique floral arrangements
for the homes on the tour.

A sincere thanks also to . . .

- All of the volunteer ticket sellers and guides
- The owners of the six homes on this year's tour
- Stewart Beal, for letting our tourgoers preview his restoration of the Norris-Thompson Block in Depot Town
- Jane Schmiedeke, for framing the commemorative photos and overseeing pre-tour ticket sales
- Penny Schreiber, for editing the home tour booklet
- Denis Schmiedeke, for his outstanding photography
- Brett Lenart, for heading up day-of-tour ticket sales
- Andrea Webber, for selling the ads for the home tour booklet
- Pattie Harrington of Standard Printing in Depot Town, for her terrific design of the home tour booklet & poster



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